

was held in abeyance continue to operate.

Licenced Stamp Vendor:

This scheme, introduced in 1969, was initially for headquarter towns of Heads of Postal Circles, and since 1983, it is extended to all areas. The scheme permits any individual, firm or society to take an agency for sale of stamps and stationery. STD/ISD/PCO booth holders are also eligible for this scheme.

Licence under this scheme is issued by the Head of Postal Division, subject to fulfilment of prescribed condition. No target is set for this purpose.

Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana:

This scheme, introduced in 1995, has been devised to provide basic postal services in areas not having such services and justifying opening of a post office. In this scheme, the Gram Panchayat of the village where post office is justified is allowed to set up Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendra to provide sale of stamps and stationery, booking of registered articles, delivery of unaccountable articles in the village, and facility for small savings schemes.

Foreign Companies in Broadcasting and Publishing Newspapers

*574. SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA:

SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have given permission to foreign firms to broadcast/telecast and publish newspapers;

(b) if so, the details thereof and its likely impact on satellite TV and All India Radio;

(c) whether only Indian partners of foreign firms have been given this permission;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the number of Indian firms which are partners of foreign firms and which have been provided these facilities?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e): Do not arise.

[English]

Deletion of Minerals From Scheduled List of Minerals

*575. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether some State Governments have represented to the Union Government to delete Limestone and Bauxite from the list of scheduled minerals under the Mines

and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957:

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. With a view to streamline the procedures for grant/renewal of Prospecting Licence/Mining Leases and to reduce delays, the State Governments of Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa and Gujarat have proposed for deletion of Limestone and Bauxite from the Schedule I of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957. The proposals received from the State Governments were discussed by the Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Mines) in its first meeting held on 29th April, 1997. The terms of reference of the Committee inter-alia include review of the existing laws and procedures governing regulation and development of minerals and to recommend steps to make them compatible with the policy changes and to suggest steps to reduce delays in grant/renewal of Prospecting Licence/Mining Lease. The Committee is also to consider and suggest further delegation of powers to the State Governments regarding grant/renewal of prospecting Licence/Mining Leases and measures to be taken to prevent illegal mining.

Formulation of New Tourism Policy

*576. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ D. CHAVAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have formulated new Tourism Policy to attract more and more foreign tourists to boost foreign exchange earnings;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government also propose to focus on high spending tourists even if they may be few in number instead of attracting low spending ones in large number who could put pressure on inadequate infrastructure without generating adequate revenue; and

(d) if so, the steps taken for 'sustainable development' of the tourist sector to provide world class facilities to visitors?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (d) The Department of Tourism has prepared a draft National Tourism Policy for the development of tourism. The salient features of the policy are:-

(i) It identifies domestic tourism, inbound tourism and outbound tourism and seeks to provide adequate focus on domestic tourism along with inbound tourism.

(ii) The policy emphasizes the poverty alleviation and employment generation aspects of tourism.

(iii) The preservation and protection of our natural

resources, environment and ecology is included as one of the objectives of tourism development.

(iv) The policy recognises that tourism should become a major avenue for the people of India and other countries to see, feel and admire its magnificent attractions and achievements.

(v) The Policy recognises the information gap in understanding the economic and social significance of tourism.

(vi) A comprehensive definition of tourism product is now included in the policy.

(vii) The policy recognises the roles of Central and State Governments, Public Sector Undertakings and private sector in the development of tourism and are clearly differentiated.

(viii) The involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions, local bodies, non Governmental Organisations and the local youth in the creation of tourist facilities for domestic tourists is recognised in the Policy.

(ix) Guidelines for the choice of new destinations for tourism development are indicated in the policy.

(x) Diversification of the tourism product to supplement the main stream of cultural tourism is recognised.

(xi) Sustainable development of tourism within the carrying capacity of the area is advocated.

(xii) Need for improving facilitation services is recognised.

(xiii) The need for a package of physical and financial incentives for the establishment of new enterprises and their wider spread is recognised.

(xiv) Foreign collaborations and investment in the private sector are encouraged.

(xv) The need for imposing plan restrictions and educating the people to reduce the adverse impacts of tourism development has been highlighted.

(xvi) The adoption of new technology in the tourism sector is emphasised.

(xvii) An Action Plan for the implementation of the Policies has been specified.

The policy lays emphasis on the development of sustainable form of tourism within the carrying capacity of the area. It is proposed to be achieved through appropriate planning instruments, guidelines and regulations. The policy, however, does not distinguish between high spending and low spending tourists as such a classification is highly subjective and difficult to implement.

Losses in SAIL

*577 SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE:

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether some public sector steel plants are running at loss;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent of loss suffered by those steel plants during the Eighth Five Year Plan period;

(d) the reasons for the losses;

(e) the steps taken to implement the modernisation plans of these steel plants in an effective manner so that those steel plants may improve their performance in the coming years; and

(f) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) to (c) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) and Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) are two Public Sector Undertakings managing the steel plants. SAIL is a profit making company, whilst RINL has suffered loss of Rs. 1709 crores from 1992-93 to 1995-96.

(d) RINL has been suffering losses due to low capacity utilisation coupled with high incidence of capital related charges viz. interest and depreciation.

(e) and (f) SAIL has already undertaken a massive renovation and technological upgradation (modernisation) programme of its integrated steel plants at Durgapur, Rourkela and Bokaro. While the Durgapur Steel Plant modernisation is being implemented through 16 (6 global & 10 indigenous) turnkey packages, the Rourkela Steel Plant modernisation is being executed on turnkey basis in two phases i.e. phase I (9 indigenous packages) and phase II (5 global and 15 indigenous packages). The Bokaro Steel Plant (Stage I) modernisation is being implemented on turnkey basis through 4 global and 34 indigenous packages. The modernisation programme of these Steel Plants are in advance stages of completion. It is expected that the performance of these integrated steel plants in terms of production, productivity etc. would improve after the modernised units are stabilised.

RINL does not require modernisation as it is a new plant. However, there is a plan to expand the capacity of RINL to 4.05 MT of liquid steel to improve its financial position.

Criticism of Censor Board

*578. SHRI VIJAY PATEL : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the